



"HE SEEMED TO BE GAZING AT SOMETHING A THOUSAND
MILES AWAY"



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S RUM SWEAT

A VIGOROUS REMEDY THAT HELPED HIM DURING
HIS PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

BY

GEORGE P. FLOYD

"I have not suffered by the South; I have suffered with the South. Their pain has been my pain; their loss has been my loss. What they have gained I have gained."



FIRST met Mr. Lincoln at Springfield, Illinois, in February, 1856. He was then practising law with W. H. Herndon; "Lincoln & Herndon" was the firm-name. Their office was in a small room in the second story of an old frame building on Sangamon Street. The floor was bare; the furniture consisted of two small desks, a little table, a few old chairs, and a long wooden bench. I remember that large pictures of Washington and Andrew Jackson hung on the wall. Books and papers were scattered about.

Mr. Lincoln wore a long, old-fashioned frock-coat and a tall "plug" hat; his breeches hardly reached to his ankles. He had on blue socks, an old-fashioned high dicky, and what was called in those days a "stock." Mr. Lincoln was made up of head, hands, feet, and length, yet it required but a very few words with him to dispel any unfavorable impression of him that might have been formed. His kind, gentle voice and manner would draw any one to him.

I had leased the Quincy House, at Quincy, Illinois. The property was owned by a widow, Mrs. Enos, who lived at Springfield. I employed Mr. Lincoln to execute the lease for me. He sent the lease to me at Quincy, but said nothing about the pay for his services. Thinking twenty-five dollars would be about right, I sent him that amount. In a few days I received a letter from Mr. Lincoln, of which the following is a copy:

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS,
February 21, 1856.

MR. GEORGE P. FLOYD,
Quincy, Illinois.

Dear Sir:—I have just received yours of 16th, with check on Flagg & Savage for twenty-

five dollars. You must think I am a high-priced man. You are too liberal with your money.

Fifteen dollars is enough for the job. I send you a receipt for fifteen dollars, and return to you a ten-dollar bill.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

Lincoln's Dangerous Breakdown during the Debates with Douglas

During the summer of 1858 Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas stumped the State of Illinois in joint debate. The first meeting was at Clinton, August 20. From there they went to Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy, and ended at Alton, October 28. While Mr. Lincoln was always temperate in all things, the "little giant" Douglas generally carried a comfortable load of the "juice of corn." On October 15 they reached Quincy, where an immense crowd assembled to listen to the debates. While Judge Douglas was very eloquent, fascinating, and rhetorical, Mr. Lincoln was neither rhetorical, graceful, nor brilliant, and used very little gesticulation. But in a little time the crowd was unconsciously and irresistibly drawn by the clearness and closeness of his argument. His fairness and candor were very noticeable. He ridiculed nothing, burlesqued nothing, misrepresented nothing. Instead of distorting the views held by Judge Douglas, he very modestly and courteously inquired into their soundness. He was too kind for bitterness and too great for vituperation.

The strain on body and mind had begun to tell on Mr. Lincoln. After he had finished his speech, he almost collapsed from sheer fatigue. He was taken by friends to his rooms in the hotel, which I was then keeping. They

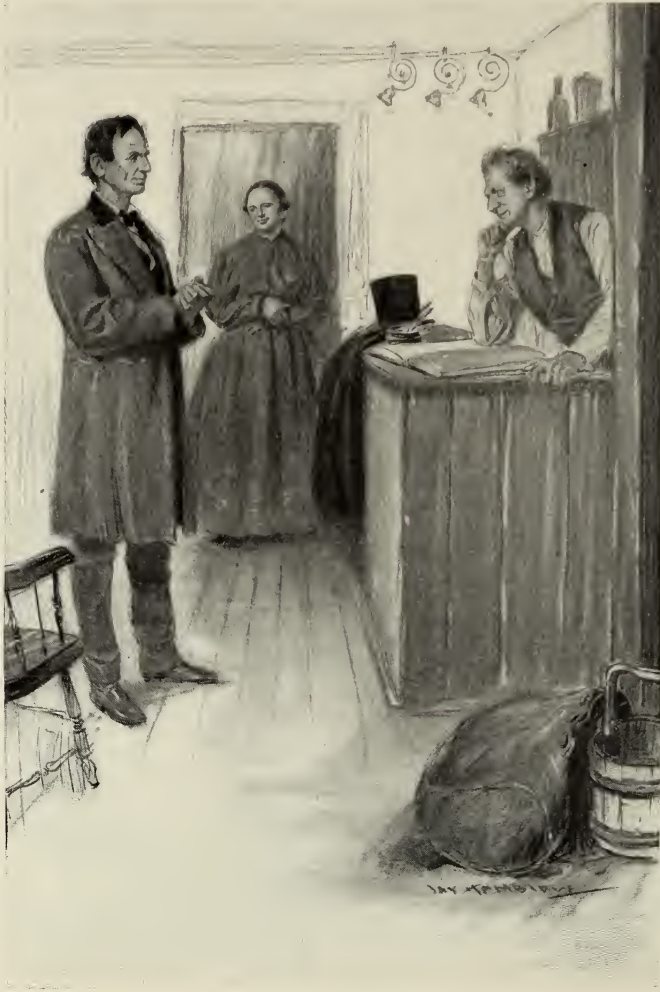
laid him on a lounge in his room, and Mr. Lincoln remarked: "I tell you, I'm mighty nigh petered out; I reckon I'll have to quit and give up the race."

How Mrs. Floyd's Rum Sweat Saved the Campaign

My wife stood watching him. She was a great

go ahead. Any port in a storm, and, I tell you, I am mighty near overboard."

The treatment was administered as directed by my wife. A pan of New England rum was placed under a cane-seated chair. The patient was stripped, seated in the chair, and covered all over with blankets. Then the rum was set afire. The fumes or vapor of the rum caused



"‘WHY, I AM FEELING LIKE A TWO-YEAR-OLD’"

believer in old-school remedies, and suggested that Mr. Lincoln be treated to a "rum sweat."

"Rum sweat!" said Mr. Lincoln. "Why, I never drank a drop of liquor in my life."

"You don't have to drink the rum," replied my wife. "It's an external treatment."

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, "if you think it will do me any good, just crack your whip and

profuse perspiration, after which the patient was put to bed, covered with woolen blankets, and given a decoction of hot ginger tea. The sweating continued.

The next morning, to our surprise, Mr. Lincoln made his appearance bright and early. We asked how he was feeling. "Why," said he, "I am feeling like a two-year-old. I can



"ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S RUM SWEAT"

jump a five-rail fence right now, I swanny! I've heard of folks drinking liquor, and rubbing their bodies with the bottle for ailments, but I never yet heard of driving the stuff through the pores of the hide to get a man full. If Mrs. Floyd would only join us in this campaign and prescribe for me, I think we could beat out Judge Douglas slick and clean."

Civil War Days

Abraham Lincoln never forgot a favor. Seven years rolled by before I met him again. In 1861 I was in business in Montgomery, Alabama. In February of that year the Confederate government met there and remained until it was removed to Richmond, Virginia.

Although I was a slaveholder before and during the war, I was not imbued with the spirit of secession, and fortunately I was exempt from military duties, for I had mail and other contracts with the Confederate government.

During the Civil War the people in the Confederate States, hemmed in as they were through the blockade by land and sea, were obliged to depend on their own resources. They had no factories of any kind, no foundries, no powder-mills, tanneries, or cotton-mills. They had worlds of cotton, but no means of manufacturing it. The extremes to which the Southern population was forced during the war, the sufferings, deprivations, and sacrifices they endured, have never been half told. Yet all the while they were surrounded by millions upon millions of wealth which they were unable to

utilize. Bales of cotton innumerable were stored away in every nook and corner of the Confederacy. It was estimated that during 1864 there was cotton enough in the Confederacy, if it were sold at the market price then ruling in the North, to pay one half of the whole war debt

of the North. From the commencement of hostilities the Confederate government imposed a war tax on all the cotton raised in the Confederacy. This percentage of the crop, pressed into bales marked "C. S. A.," was stored in warehouses throughout the Confederacy.

To President Lincoln for Protection

When the Federals captured cotton, it was sold at auction, and the proceeds were deposited in the United States Treasury, subject to the decision of the Court of Claims. In December, 1864, about forty thousand bales were captured by General Sherman at Savannah, Georgia, and sent to New York to be sold at auction. The proceeds of this sale, amounting to many millions of dollars, went into the United States Treasury. There is to-day in the treasury a large deposit representing the proceeds of cotton captured during the war, which has never been successfully claimed.

In December, 1864,

I concluded to leave the Confederate States. I left Montgomery, Alabama, December 15, going from Charleston, South Carolina, to Nassau on the blockade-runner *Arrow*, thence to New York on a regular steamer.

Since I left a considerable amount of perishable property in the South, I was anxious to



"'I HAVE NOT SUFFERED BY THE SOUTH,'
HE SAID; 'I HAVE SUFFERED WITH
THE SOUTH'"

get protection papers from the Federal government, to save it when the Federals should capture Montgomery. Armed with letters of recommendation from Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts, Governor Joe Gilmore of New Hampshire, and a very strong personal letter from General Ben Prentiss (whom, together with his staff, I had befriended while they were prisoners of war in Selma, Alabama, in 1863), I proceeded to Washington. At that time, on account of the hundreds seeking interviews, it was very difficult to get an audience with Mr. Lincoln.

Lincoln at his Desk in the White House

After five or six days' waiting I succeeded in reaching him. It so happened that I was the last visitor before the closing hour of business. When I entered his rooms, he was sitting in his office chair with his long legs resting on the desk. His feet were incased in old-fashioned carpet-slippers. His face as it looked at that time I shall never forget. He "looked like death." His pale, haggard features, furrowed with wrinkles, his sunken eyes and care-worn face, made me hesitate to trouble him.

For a few moments he did not move a muscle, and seemed to be gazing at something a thousand miles away. At last, taking up my card and without changing his position, he said in a very kindly voice, "Well, my friend, what can I do for you?"

"Mr. President," I replied, "you look too tired and care-worn to do anything for anybody. I hate to trouble you."

"Oh, I'm all right," he replied. "What can I do for you?"

I laid my papers before him. He commenced reading them. He had read but a few lines of General Prentiss' letter, when he jumped up, grasped my hand, and said: "Why, I have seen you before, sir; I remember you very well. I believe your wife saved my life when I was at Quincy in 1858. Yes, and I have taken that 'rum sweat' that she prescribed for me many times, and I have prescribed it for some of my friends. It has always been a dead shot." And quickly, as if the keeper of the lighthouse had lighted the beacon-light, the cloud lifted from his face, his eyes snapped, and his thoughts seemed to hark back to the bygone days of 1858.

The President's Tea which Became a Cabinet Meeting

"You must come up and take tea with us to-night," said he. "I want to talk with you about matters and things in the South. Ben

Prentiss tells me that you are well posted about things down there."

I accepted his invitation, and, before we got through with the confab, it proved to be quite a cabinet meeting. We were joined by Mr. Fessenden, then Secretary of the Treasury, O. H. Browning, Secretary of the Interior, and Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War.

My mail and other contracts with the Confederate government during the war had enabled me to keep behind the scenes and observe some of the workings and tricks of the misguided officials who sailed the water-logged Confederate craft into rough and ragged rocks, to shipwreck and destruction.

The Plan to Save Confederate Cotton

I was enabled to give Mr. Lincoln some information of which he had never dreamed in regard to the Confederacy. Before I left Montgomery, in December, I had procured a list of all the cotton in eight warehouses in the city, and a list of many of its claimants. In the eight warehouses were stored one hundred and twenty-eight thousand bales of cotton, subject to the order of the various claimants. Twenty-three thousand bales of that cotton were the property of the Confederate States government and marked "C. S. A." The balance, one hundred and five thousand bales, belonged to different persons, fifteen hundred bales of it being my own. At that time cotton was selling in New York and New Orleans at about eighty cents a pound. If the twenty-three thousand bales of Confederate cotton could be captured or saved, it would be worth — eleven and a half million pounds at eighty cents — \$9,200,000, which would go into the United States Treasury as confiscated property. The balance, one hundred and five thousand bales, fifty-two and a half million pounds, would have sold for \$42,000,000. I laid a plan before Mr. Lincoln and Secretary Fessenden to save the cotton in Montgomery. They both favored my plan and at once proceeded to give me every facility to prosecute it successfully. My idea appealed especially to Mr. Lincoln, who had always been in favor of drawing all the cotton out of the Confederacy.

The Confederacy Like Bill Sikes' Dog

The President was forever illustrating his theories by telling some funny story, as he did in this case. Said Mr. Lincoln: "The Confederacy is like Bill Sikes' dog. Old Bill Sikes had a yaller dog, a worthless cur. His strong holt was to run out and bark at passers-by, and scare horses and children. The boys in the neighborhood decided to

have some fun with the no-account canine brute. They procured a small stick of giant-powder, inserted a cap and fuse in it, wrapped a piece of meat around it, lit the fuse, laid the little joker on the sidewalk, whistled, and climbed the fence to see the fun. Out comes the dog with his usual 'wow, wow!' He scented the meat and bolted the bundle. In a few seconds there was a terrible explosion. Dog-meat was flying in all directions. Out comes Sikes from the house, bareheaded. 'What in hell's up?' yelled old Bill. 'Why, the dog's up,' cried the boys on the fence. While old Bill was gazing around in wonderment, something dropped at his feet. He picked it up, and found it was his dog's tail. While looking sorrowfully at the appendage of his departed canine friend, he exclaimed, 'Well, I'll be damned if I think old Tige'll amount to much after this as a dog.' And," said Mr. Lincoln, "so it would be with the Confederacy. Take all their cotton away from them, and it wouldn't amount to shucks. It would fry all the fat out of them."

"I have Suffered with the South"

Mr. Lincoln's feelings toward the South during the war were more of sympathy than of hostility.

"I have not suffered by the South," he said; "I have suffered with the South. Their pain has been my pain; their loss has been my loss. What they have gained I have gained."

I was appointed agent at Montgomery to take charge of all the cotton that was captured when the city fell into the possession of the Federals. With proper credentials, I left Washington for Montgomery March 21. Reaching Mobile April 2, I at once started across country on horseback, overtaking General A. J. Smith's troops about seventy-five miles south of Selma, on their way to capture Montgomery. I made arrangements to have the advance-guard of his army surround the warehouses as soon as they entered the city, to protect the cotton from fire and pillage. Pushing on, I reached Montgomery two days

ahead of the Federals. The city was then in command of the Confederate General Beaufort.

The Confederates had decided to evacuate the city without a fight. A number of gentlemen, who owned a large portion of the cotton stored in the warehouses, formed a deputation to wait upon General Beaufort. I joined them, and we used every argument to persuade the general to leave the warehouses intact when the city was evacuated, offering to account to him for the net proceeds of two thousand bales of cotton. The general was at first in favor of complying with our request.

The Burning of the Cotton

Everything looked favorable to our plan for saving the cotton. Then, all at once, General Beaufort began to "crawlfish." The fact was, the general had been taking what was known in Confederate parlance as "pine-top," which had unbalanced his craft and changed his course of sailing. He became as stubborn as a mule. We couldn't budge him an inch.

At twelve o'clock that night he ordered the torch applied to every cotton warehouse. In spite of all we could do, the eight warehouses, containing one hundred and twenty-eight thousand bales of cotton, worth \$51,200,000 in good money, went up in smoke, without a cent of insurance, doing no one a particle of good. In many cases the cotton was all that the owners had saved out of the wreckage of the war. Men who had always lived in affluence, and who had never known what want was, were reduced to abject poverty by that cruel, uncalled-for, wanton act.

Mr. Lincoln's wife was Miss Mary Todd of Kentucky. Her brother, Thomas Todd, lived in Alabama during the war. In April, 1865, while I was at Montgomery, Alabama, I received a personal letter from Mr. Lincoln requesting me to attend to a little matter concerning Mrs. Lincoln and her brother, which I did. That letter was dated at Washington, D. C., April 10, 1865. Four days later Lincoln was assassinated.